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Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of transmitting optical signal traffic, comprising:

providing an all optical network with at least two rings that are geographically dispersed, each ring including at least one transmitter and at least one receiver;

separating the available wavelengths into distinct ring bands;

sharing the optical signal traffic throughout the entire optical network;

providing each ring with its own distinct ring band of the optical signal traffic, wherein all of the optical signal traffic is transmittable throughout the optical network and each receiver is configured to receive only wavelengths in a ring band designated for its associated ring; and

providing each receiver with a hierarchical mechanism to separate received light at different signal wavelengths within a designated ring band into a plurality of separate optical signals each having a plurality of signal channels and to filter each separate optical signal to extract a selected signal channel.

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2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein all of the ring bands have a same number of optical signals.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the ring bands have a same number of optical signals.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein all of the ring bands have a different number of optical signals.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the ring bands have different numbers of optical signals.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein none of the ring bands shares a common wavelength with another ring band.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein all of the optical network traffic is included in the ring bands.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each ring includes at least two nodes.

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9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein each node includes at least one transmitter and one receiver.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each ring in the optical network includes at least a first and a second fiber with all of the optical signal traffic traveling in both of the first and second fibers, wherein the optical signal traffic travels in a clockwise direction in the first fiber and in a counter-clockwise direction in the second fiber.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10, wherein the first and second fibers are each coupled to a 1x1 or 1x2 switch.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising:  
maintaining the 1x1 or 1x2 switch in an open position when there is no break point in an associated ring, and closing the 1x1 or 1x2 switch upon an occurrence of a break point in the associated ring.

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13. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising:  
discovering a break point in an ring by monitoring an  
optical supervision signal that travels through the associated  
ring.

14. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the optical  
network includes a 1x2 band-splitter and a 2x1 coupler that  
couples the optical signal traffic between the at least two  
rings.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, further  
comprising:

coupling the optical signal traffic between the at least  
two rings through the 1x2 band-splitter and the 2x1 coupler.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each ring in  
the optical network includes a fiber with the same signal  
traffic duplicated in two different bands that travel in both  
clockwise and counter-clockwise directions.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the optical  
network includes, first, second and third rings, each ring  
including a first and a second protection fibers with all of the

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optical signal traffic traveling in both of the first and second protection fibers, wherein the optical signal traffic travels in a clockwise direction in the first protection fiber and in a counter-clockwise direction in the second protection fiber.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein each of the first and second protection fibers is coupled to a 1x1 switch.

19. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the optical network further includes a first and second MxM optical switches, where M is the total number of ring bands.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, further comprising:  
coupling the optical signal traffic between the at least first and second rings with the first and second MxM switches, wherein the first MxM switch routes the optical signal traffic in a clockwise direction, and the second MxM switch routes the optical signal traffic in a counter-clockwise direction.

21. (Previously Presented) A method of transmitting optical traffic, comprising:

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providing an all optical network with at least two rings that are geographically dispersed, each ring including at least one transmitter and at least one receiver;

sharing a sufficiently large enough number of wavelengths in the at least two rings to eliminate O-E-O conversions between the rings;

sharing the optical signal traffic throughout the entire optical network;

providing each ring with its own distinct ring band of the optical signal traffic, wherein all of the optical signal traffic is transmittable throughout the optical network and each receiver is configured to receive only wavelengths in a ring band designated for its associated ring; and

providing each receiver with a hierarchical mechanism to separate received light into a plurality of separate optical signals each having a plurality of channels and to filter each separate optical signal to extract a selected channel.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein all of the ring bands have a same number of optical signals.

23. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein at least a portion of the ring bands have a same number of optical signals.

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24. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein all of the ring bands have a different number of optical signals.

25. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein at least a portion of the ring bands have different numbers of optical signals.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, wherein none of the ring bands shares a common wavelength with another ring band.

27. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein all of the optical network traffic is included in the ring bands.

28. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein each ring includes at least two nodes.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein each node includes at least one transmitter and one receiver.

30. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein each ring in the optical network includes at least a first and a second

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fibers with all of the optical signal traffic traveling in both of the first and second fibers, wherein the optical signal traffic travels in a clockwise direction in the first fiber and in a counter-clockwise direction in the second fiber.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 30, wherein the first and second fibers are each coupled to a 1x1 or 1x2 switch.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, further comprising: maintaining the 1x1 or 1x2 switch in an open position when there is no break point in an associated ring, and closing the 1x1 or 1x2 switch upon an occurrence of a break point in the associated ring.

33. (Original) The method of claim 32, further comprising: discovering a break point in an ring by monitoring an optical supervision signal that travels through the associated ring.

34. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the optical network includes a 1x2 band-splitter and a 2x1 coupler that

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couples the optical signal traffic between the at least two rings.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, further comprising:

coupling the optical signal traffic between the at least two rings through the 1x2 band-splitter and the 2x1 coupler.

36. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein each ring in the optical network includes a fiber with the same signal traffic duplicated in two different bands that travel in both clockwise and counter-clockwise directions.

37. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the optical network includes, first, second and third rings, each ring including a first and a second protection fibers with all of the optical signal traffic traveling in both of the first and second protection fibers, wherein the optical signal traffic travels in a clockwise direction in the first protection fiber and in a counter-clockwise direction in the second protection fiber.

38. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein each of the first and second protection fibers is coupled to a 1x1 switch.

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39. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the optical network further includes a first and second MxM optical switches, where M is the total number of ring bands.

40. (Original) The method of claim 39, further comprising:  
coupling the optical signal traffic between the at least first and second rings with the first and second MxM switches, wherein the first MxM switch routes the optical signal traffic in a clockwise direction, and the second MxM switch routes the optical signal traffic in a counter-clockwise direction.

41. (Previously Presented) A method of transmitting optical signal traffic, comprising:

providing an all optical network with hierarchical rings, each hierarchical ring including a plurality of nodes and each node including at least one transmitter and one receiver;  
separating the optical signal traffic into ring bands;  
transmitting the optical signal traffic through all of the hierarchical rings; and  
providing each hierarchical ring with its own distinct ring band, wherein all of the available wavelengths are transmittable throughout each hierarchical ring, and the receivers of a

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hierarchical ring are configured to receive only wavelengths in a ring band that is designated for that hierarchical ring.

42. (Previously Presented) An all optical network for optical signal traffic, comprising:

at least a first and a second ring, each ring having at least one transmitter and one receiver and its own distinct ring band of the optical signal traffic, wherein all of the optical signal traffic is transmittable throughout the entire all optical network and each receiver is configured to receive only wavelengths in a ring band designated for its associated ring; and

a central hub that couples the at least first and second rings, the central hub separating the optical signal traffic into ring bands,

wherein each receiver in each ring comprises a hierarchical mechanism which comprises at least one optical element operable to separate received light into a plurality of separate optical signals each having a plurality of signal channels, and a plurality of optical filters optically coupled to receive and filter the separate optical signals, respectively, to extract respective selected signal channels.

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43. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein each ring includes at least a first and a second protection fibers that carry all of the optical signal traffic, wherein the optical signal traffic travels in a clockwise direction in the first protection fiber and in a counter-clockwise direction in the second protection fiber.

44. (Previously Presented) The all optical network of claim 43, wherein at least one 1x1 or 1x2 switch is coupled to each of the first and second protection fibers.

45. (Original) The all optical network of claim 44, wherein each 1x1 or 1x2 switch is maintained in an open position when there is no break point in an associated ring, and each 1x1 or 1x2 switch is closed upon an occurrence of a break point in the associated ring.

46. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein the central hub includes at least one 1x2 band-splitter and a 2x1 coupler that couple the optical signal traffic between the at least first and second rings.

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47. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, further comprising: first and second MxM optical switches, where M is the total number of ring bands.

48. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein each ring includes multiple nodes.

49. (Original) The all optical network of claim 48, wherein each node includes at least one transmitter and one receiver.

50. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, further comprising:

at least one mesh-based long haul network coupled to the at least first and second rings.

51. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein the at least first and second rings are geographically dispersed.

52. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein the at least first and second rings are hierarchical rings.

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53. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein each of the at least first and second rings includes a 2x1 coupler for adding traffic and a 1x2 coupler for dropping traffic.

54. (Original) The all optical network of claim 53, further comprising;

a broadband gain-equalizer and a gain-clamped optical amplifier positioned between the first 2x1 coupler and the second 1x2 coupler of the at least first and second rings.

55. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein all of the ring bands have a same number of optical signals.

56. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein at least a portion of the ring bands have a same number of optical signals.

57. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein all of the ring bands have a different number of optical signals.

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58. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein at least a portion of the ring bands have different numbers of optical signals.

59. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein none of ring bands share common wavelengths.

60. (Original) The all optical network of claim 42, wherein all of the optical network traffic is included in the ring bands.

Claims 61-85: Canceled.

86. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein at least one of the two rings comprises a central hub optically coupled to the first and second fibers to include a first hub optical switch in the first fiber and a second hub optical switch in the second fiber, the method further comprising:

opening the first hub optical switch to create a break point when there is no other break point in the first fiber; and  
closing the first hub optical switch when there is a break point in the first fiber.

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87. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein at least one of the two rings comprises a central hub optically coupled to the first and second fibers to include a first hub optical switch in the first fiber and a second hub optical switch in the second fiber, the method further comprising:

operating each of the first and second hub optical switches to maintain a break point in each of the first and second fibers.

88. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein at least one of the two rings comprises a central hub optically coupled to the first and second fibers to include a first hub optical switch in the first fiber and a second hub optical switch in the second fiber, and wherein the first fiber ring comprises an optical switch outside the central hub,

the method further comprising:

opening the optical switch outside the central hub to maintain a break point in the first fiber when the first hub optical switch in the central hub is closed; and

closing the first optical switch outside the central hub while keeping the first hub optical switch in the central hub closed when there is a break in the first fiber.

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89. (New) The method of claim 88, wherein the optical switch outside the central hub is located in a node coupled to the first and the second fibers.

90. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising using a tunable laser in the at least one transmitter in each ring to launch a dynamically tunable wavelength into the optical network.

91. (New) The method of claim 90, further comprising using a tunable optical filter in the at least one receiver in each ring to form a dynamic wavelength-tunable receiver.

92. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising using a tunable optical filter in the at least one receiver in each ring to form a dynamic wavelength-tunable receiver.

93. (New) The method of claim 41, further comprising using a tunable laser in the at least one transmitter in a node to launch a dynamically tunable wavelength into the optical network.

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94. (New) The method of claim 93, further comprising using a tunable optical filter in the at least one receiver in at least one of the nodes to form a dynamic wavelength-tunable receiver.

95. (New) The method of claim 41, further comprising using a tunable optical filter in the at least one receiver in one node to form a dynamic wavelength-tunable receiver.